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C O N F I D E N T I A L VATICAN 004918

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/WE LEVIN; NEA/RA; IO/UNP; DRL/IRF: DEATHERAGE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/25/2013

TAGS: [IZ](#) [KIRF](#) [PREL](#) [VT](#)

SUBJECT: HOLY SEE AND IRAQ: NEW PASSPORTS, UNSCR, CHALDEAN PATRIARCH

REF: A. A) STATE 294152

[B](#). B) VATICAN 283

Classified By: Ambassador Jim Nicholson for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (U) This cable contains an action request. Please see paragraph 3.

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HOLY SEE FORESEES NO PROBLEM ON PASSPORT REQUEST  
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[2](#). (U) Poloff met October 24 with Holy See Office Director for Iraq Franco Coppola to deliver Ref A demarche and non-paper on Iraqi diplomatic and service passports. Coppola did not anticipate that the Vatican would have any difficulty honoring Iraqi passports or facilitating travel of Iraqi diplomatic and official personnel. Coppola took on board our nonpaper, noting the serial numbers of the passports in question.

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ACTION REQUEST: IRAQI DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL  
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[3](#). (SBU) Coppola said that the Holy See has had no news of a new Iraqi ambassador to the Vatican. He was also unsure of the whereabouts of the former ambassador to the Vatican, Abdul-Amir Al-Anbari (and his staff). Post has previously advised the Holy See per Department guidance that the Ambassador had failed to report to the Provisional Authorities in Iraq and therefore should no longer be considered an Iraqi representative. Post requests information on plans for Iraqi diplomatic presence in Vatican City and any revised guidance on the diplomatic/legal status of previous Iraqi diplomatic staff accredited to the Holy See.

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UNSCR: A STEP FORWARD  
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[4](#). (SBU) Turning to the recently-passed UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) on Iraq, Coppola called it "a step forward." He acknowledged the importance of the unanimous vote on the resolution, and said its passage was not just a victory for the U.S., but for the entire Security Council, which the Holy See believes needs to find common ground and cooperate on Iraq. Still, Coppola lamented the lack of enthusiasm on the part of some members of the Security Council, and said the next step would be for all parties to exhibit "concrete collaboration on the ground." In a related point, Coppola noted the presence of Archbishop Paul Josef Cordes, President of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, at the international donors conference for Iraqi reconstruction in Madrid. Cor Unum is the arm of the Vatican that coordinates the activities of Vatican-related development agencies and distributes donations made to the Church for worldwide humanitarian aid initiatives (REF D). Archbishop Cordes had visited Iraq shortly after the end of hostilities to deliver assistance from the Pope and coordinate Catholic assistance with local bishops and Caritas Iraq, which remains active in providing medical assistance in major cities.

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DECISION SHOULD COME SOON ON NEW CHALDEAN PATRIARCH  
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[5](#). (C) Turning to the pending decision to name a new patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Iraq, Coppola said a decision by the Pope should be forthcoming "in the coming days." After the death of Chaldean Patriarch Raphael Bidawid in July, a synod of Chaldean bishops convened in Baghdad in August to select a new patriarch; however, no candidate gained the necessary percentage of votes to be forwarded to the Pope for his approval. In this case, Coppola told us, the Pope has a free hand to choose the next patriarch, and will do so soon. The Holy See recognizes it should not "leave the Chaldeans without a leader for too long," Coppola said. (COMMENT: The new Chaldean Patriarch will likely play a role in Chaldean efforts to gain greater representation in Iraqi government structures. While 19 Chaldean religious leaders complained in a September letter

to the Coalition Provisional Authority of insufficient representation of Christians on national councils and commissions, Vatican news agency Fides reported later in the month on Christian representation on several regional councils. END COMMENT.)

16. (U) Minimize considered.

Nicholson

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